

NEWS RELEASE



Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office
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Luis A. Valentin, Prosecutor

JURY CONVICTS FORMER HOWELL TOWNSHIP HOUSING DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE OF OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT, THEFT

On April 12, 2010, a Monmouth County jury convicted Kimberly S. Alvarez, 48, of Howell Township, N.J., of second degree Official Misconduct and third degree Theft by Deception. Monmouth County Superior Court Judge Francis J. Vernioia, who presided over the two week trial, is scheduled to sentence Alvarez on June 4, 2010.

Evidence elicited during the course of the trial revealed that from July 25, 2006, through June 30, 2008, Alvarez used her public position to steal more than \$17,000 from over 253 Howell Township residents. Alvarez was employed as Clerk-Typist for the Howell Township Housing Department from July 21, 2006 through June 30, 2008. In her capacity as a Clerk-Typist, Alvarez' duties and responsibilities included the collection of housing related fees, scheduling appointments for home inspections, filing inspection applications and managing funds for the Housing Department.

On August 26, 2008, a Howell Township resident went to the Howell Township Housing Department seeking a refund for a cash payment. During the processing of the refund request, it was discovered that despite the resident being in possession of a receipt documenting the cash payment, there was no corresponding record within the Township's records documenting the payment, or a corresponding bank deposit in that amount. Based on this discovery, the Township conducted an audit of all cash payments. As a result of the audit, it was determined that during Alvarez' employment, numerous cash payments were not recorded or deposited as they should have been. The results of the audit were turned over to law enforcement authorities. The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office and the Howell Township Police Department conducted the investigation.

Alvarez was arrested on September 23, 2008. Howell Township Municipal Court Judge John G. Colannino set bail for Alvarez at \$50,000. Alvarez posted bail and was released on September 24, 2008. A Monmouth County Grand Jury returned an indictment against Alvarez on January 26, 2009. Alvarez remains free on bail pending sentencing.

As a result of the jury's verdict, Alvarez faces a maximum potential sentence of up to 10 year State Prison term on the Official Misconduct charge, and a maximum potential sentence of up to 5 year State Prison term on the Theft charge.

Monmouth County Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin stated, "Alvarez, as a public official, grossly abused her position of trust by stealing over \$17,000 from the Howell Township Housing Department. Alvarez deliberately and carefully engaged in a course of criminal conduct over two years which resulted in a significant financial loss to her employer and to the residents of Howell Township."

The case is assigned to Assistant Monmouth County Prosecutor Barbara Suppa. Alvarez is represented by Travis J. Tormey, Esquire of Red Bank, N.J.

Released: April 12, 2010